

## Returning from Deployment

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### Summary

Returning from deployment is an exciting but stressful time for Servicemembers and their Families. The stress of the return can be a surprise to Family members and sometimes painful. The transition may be easier for Family members if they attend the Yellow Ribbon events, understand the reunion process, and learn about how to make the reunion less stressful.

There are three two-day Yellow Ribbon events for Servicemembers and their Families after deployment to help with the transition process.

- The first event occurs 30 days after demobilization and is for Servicemembers and their Families. The event provides assistance on how to reconnect and resources to mitigate the stressors associated with the extended separation. Items covered during the event include marriage counseling, VA benefits, VA VET center, TRICARE, domestic violence awareness and prevention, resilience skills, substance abuse awareness, Psychological First Aid, safety awareness, Military OneSource, and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).
- The second event occurs 60 days after demobilization and is for Servicemembers and their Families. The event provides assistance on how to reconnect and resources to mitigate the stressors associated with the extended separation. Areas covered during the event include mental health awareness and referral, anger management, substance abuse awareness, Psychological First Aid, domestic violence awareness, VA benefits, financial and tax assistance, legal issues, and child and youth issues.
- The last event occurs 90 days after demobilization and is only for Servicemembers. The event is focused around the physical and mental health of the Servicemember. The event is in a small group setting giving Servicemembers the opportunity to discuss deployment experiences, pay and finance process, and military careers in a small group. Receive assistance on completing the Post Deployment Health Re-Assessment (PDHRA) form and information about Psychological First Aid.

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### Common Feelings and Behaviors Post-Deployment

	Feelings	Behaviors
Spouses	Fear of infidelity Let down after the reunion Anger Jealousy	Suspiciousness of spousal abuse Withdrawal Physical violence Difficulties in compromising
Servicemembers	Happiness Anger	Need of recognition Trouble sleeping
Preschool Children	Excitement Anger Afraid of returning parent Need of reassurance	Need of recognition Clingy Passive behavior Attention seeking behaviors
Elementary Children	Excitement Anger Anxiety	Need of recognition Attention seeking behaviors Acts out in anger
Teenagers	Anger Relief Resentment	Defiance Behavior problems Problems in school

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### Servicemember's Five Phases of the Reunion

Phase	Timeframe	Description	Things to expect
Pre-entry	The first few days before the reunion	Working long hours to ensure all work is complete before arriving home	Fantasies, excitement, work, planning, thoughts
Reunion	Immediate meeting with Family and the first few days	Focus on courtship, relearning, and intimacy, not on addressing problems	Physical changes, courtship, excitement, intimacy, tiredness, social events
Disruption	Few weeks or months after the reunion	Problems start to come up	Independence, jealousy, differences, control, trust, unresolved issues, decision making
Communication	Few weeks or months after the reunion	Renegotiation of new routines, roles, acceptance of control, and decision making	Acceptance, trust, renegotiation, reconnection, explanation of new rules
Normal	Few weeks or months after the reunion	Growing, sharing, and experiencing the ups and downs of Family life	Acceptance of change, personal growth, establishment of routines

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## **Quick Guide: Finding Local Resources**

1. Access the [Joint Services Support – Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Website](#) or [National Guard Family Program Website](#)
2. Click on “Find Local Resources”
3. Select your State
4. Click on “Next”
5. Select the personnel and/or organization resources you wish to find (e.g., ARNG YRRP Program Manager)
6. Click on “Next”
7. Receive information about local events and/or personnel

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. What can I do before my Servicemember returns?**

- A. The following is a list of ideas Family members can do before a Servicemember's return:
- Communicate details about the return plan with the Servicemembers and Family members
  - Come up with a backup plan in case of an emergency
  - Plan something special with the Servicemember (i.e. gifts, welcome home meal, celebration)
  - Avoid planning a large celebration with the Servicemember (i.e. a Family vacation to Disney World)
  - Be understanding if the reunion doesn't meet your expectations

### **Q. What can I do on the day of the reunion?**

- A. The following is a list of ideas Family members can do on the day of the reunion:
- Plan something special to welcome the Servicemember
  - Come up with a plan “B”
  - Expect the Servicemember's emotions to change throughout the day

### **Q. What should I expect the first week back?**

- A. The first week back from a deployment can be a very stressful time for both the Servicemember and the Family. Feelings during the first week after deployment may change depending on the type of deployment. The following is a list of ideas Family members can do to help ease the Servicemember's return home:
- Don't over schedule the calendar
  - Don't expect the Servicemember to jump back into household chores just like before
  - Spend time together
  - Expect children to test and/or break rules both at home and school
  - Monitor your finances
  - Continue with activities that are relaxing and joyful

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## Links

- [Joint Services Support – Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program](#)  
This website provides the mission and vision of the National Guard Bureau's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program and information about the Yellow Ribbon program events that occur throughout the deployment cycle.
- [National Guard Family Program](#)  
This website provides the mission and vision of the National Guard Family program, information about the partnerships the National Guard has formed with local, regional, and national communities, and information about financial, household, and emotional support.
- [Yellow Ribbon Program](#)  
This website provides information and resources on the Yellow Ribbon program to Servicemembers, their Families, and military leadership, web links for recent news articles about the program, policy and guidance references, and additional resources (i.e. health care, counseling, financial, legal, etc.).
- [Hooah 4 Health – Deployment Guide: For Families of Deploying Soldiers](#)  
This website provides an overview of the five phases of the reunion and common feelings and behaviors from Family members.
- [Military Spouse Career Center – Returning to Family Life After Military Deployment](#)  
This website provides tips for Family members on what to do before the reunion, the day of the reunion, the first week after the reunion, and months after the reunion.
- [American Red Cross](#)  
This website provides information on how to get assistance from the American Red Cross, how to find your local Red Cross center, how to get involved, and how to prepare for an emergency.
- [4-H](#)  
This website provides the history of the 4-H community, a list of programs involved in the community, how to get involved, and resources.

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## Points of Contact

- ARNG-HRF  
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